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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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EO 11652:NA
TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, AU
SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE COMPLETED

REF: VIENNA 6810

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: FIVE CABINET APPOINTEES TO CHANCELLOR KREISKY'S GOVERNMENT WERE SWORN IN ON OCTOBER 1 AND, EXCEPT FOR VICE CHANCELLOR ANDROSCH WHO WAS AT THE MANILA WORLD BANK CONFERENCE, WERE PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT AT ITS OPENING SESSION ON OCTOBER 6, THEREBY COMPLETING ACTION ON A GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE WHICH KREISKY INDICATED EARLIER THIS YEAR WOULD TAKE PLACE BEFORE LATE FALL. END SUMMARY.

2. THE POSITIONS AFFECTED AND THEIR INCUMBENTS FLLOW:

A) VICE CHANCELLOR (AND, AS HERETOFORE, FINANCE MINISTER)
HANNES ANDROSCH;

B) FOREIGN MINISTER WILLIBALD PAHR;

C) SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTER GERHARD WEISSENBERG;

D) AGRICULTURE MINISTER GUENTHER HAIDEN;
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E) AGRICULTURE STATE SECRETARY ALBIN SCHOBER.

3. RESHUFFLE WAS PROMPTED BY VOLUNTARY RETIREMENTS OF

VICE CHANCELLOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTER HAEUSER, FOREIGN MINISTER BIELKA, AND AGRICULTURE MINISTER WEIHS. KRESIKY CHOICEFOF SUCCESSORS WAS BASED ON GOVERNMENTAL, PARTY-POLITICAL AND PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS. THE REPLACEMENTS WERE PERSONALLY PICKED BY KREISKY AND LATER APPROVED BY SOCIALIST PARTY LEADERSHIP BUT NOT WITHOUT SOME OBJECTIONS BEING RAISED.

4. ON BALANCE, RESHUFFLE SHOULD STRENGTHEN SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT BY BRINGING NEW PEOPLE AND, AS KRESIKY HOPES, SOME NEW IDEAS IN FIELDS OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND AGRICULTURE. IN LATTER CASE, LEADERSHIP OF MINISTRY HAS BEEN FURTHER STRENGTHENED IN KREISKY'S VIEW BY ESTABLISHMENT OF POSITION OF STATE SECRETARY. SELECTION OF (FINANCE MINISTER) ANDROSCH AS VICE CHANCELLOR ACCORDS WITH CHANCELLOR'S EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN BALANCE BEING GENERALLY IDENTIFIED WITH RIGHT OF CENTER GROUP IN PARTY. ANDROSCH APPOINTMENT ALSO HAS EFFECT OF KEEPING OPEN COMPETITION OVER KREISKY SUCCESSORSHIP WITH ANDORSCH AND VIENNA MAYOR GRATZ STILL BEING PRIME CONTENDERS. DESIGNATION OF PAHR AS FOREIGN MINISTER WAS DISAPPOINTING TO YOUNG SOCIALISTS WHO TOUTED AUSTRIAN US AMBASSADOR JANKOWITSCH. MOVE HOWEVER REFLECTS KREISKY'S WISH TO CONTINUE TO BE HIS OWN FOREIGN MINISTER WHILE PUTTING FOREIGN MINISTRY UNDER WHAT CONSIDERED TO BE BETTER MANAGEMENT TEAM.

5. APPOINTMENT OF PAHR AS FOREIGN MINISTER AND SCHOBER AS AGRICULTURE STATE SECRETARY ALSO TESTED SOCIALIST PARTY DISCIPLINE SINCE PAHR IS CURRENTLY NON-AFFILIATED POLITICALLY AFTER HAVING LEFT OPPOSITION PEOPLE'S PARTY AND SINCE SCHOBER HAS HELD MEMBERSHIP IN ALL THREE PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT, LATEST BEING THAT OF SOCIALIST PARTY. COMPLAINT IS ONE THAT UNDER KREISKY LEADERSHIP MEMBERSHIP IN SOCIALIST PARTY SEEMS TO HAVE BECOME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

BARRIER, NOT WAY STATION TO HIGH OFFICE IN SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT. THESE APPOINTMENTS, WHILE NOT APPLAUDED BY

SOCIALIST RANK AND FILE, DO HOWEVER ENABLE KREISKY TO CLAIM HIS GOVERNMENT IS OPEN TO COMPETENCY REGARDLESS OF PARTY AFFILIATION AND THUS TO PROJECT IMAGE OF PUBLIC SUPPORT EXTENDING BEYOND SIMPLY THAT OF SOCIALIST

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PARTY. NEW KREISKY GOVERNMENT ALSO SEEMS TO BE FEW
SHADES CLOSER TO CENTER OF POLITICAL SPECTRUM, WHICH
AGAIN IS IN KEEPING WITH SPIRIT OF TIMES AND MOOD OF

POPULATION. BUCHANAN

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